

## BUSINESS AND POLITICS ON THE FRONTIER— ASPECTS OF THE CAREER OF WILLIAM BLOUNT

IN recent years the frontier has had for the American historian something of the same compelling lure that it had for his ancestors. Since the work of Frederick Jackson Turner the frontier has never been neglected in assessing the bases of American civilization, and even before Turner's day American histories abounded with pictures of the heroic frontiersmen, clad in buckskin and coonskin, battling the forests, the animals, and the Indians, and with tales of the sturdy homesteader with brave wife setting forth to found a new abode in the wilderness.

These *were* heroic and significant figures, but there is another aspect of the western advance which has only recently, and as yet incompletely, received due attention. This is the role of the big businessman of the frontier—the land speculator. As Thomas P. Abernethy says:

Speculation in lands was the most absorbing enterprise during the later colonial, the Revolutionary, and the early Republican periods. Except in the few commercial centers, there was little else in which one could speculate, and lands were enticingly available to the politicians during that era of transition. (1)

Arthur P. Whitaker, another historian of the Southwest, adds:

The purchase of presents for the Indians, tools, arms, and flatboats for the settlers, the payment of surveyors, the securing of grants from state legislatures—such essential steps in the establishment of a new colony required concerted action and extensive financial resources, and were therefore beyond the power of any individual frontiersman no matter how brave in conflict or cunning in woodlore he might be. The land specu-

lators, who possessed these resources, were something more than mere real estate agents, or at any rate they were real estate agents cast in a heroic mold. Now they intoxicated a whole Indian tribe, now corrupted a state legislature, now erected a new state when they found none ready to serve their purpose. (2)

Thus the American businessman-speculator from the earliest colonial days turned west, along with such other American types as the hunter and the homesteader. As the latter adapted himself to his new environment by learning Indian warfare and woodlore, so the eastern businessman did likewise by associating with himself frontier employees, familiar with the Indians and lands of the new area of activity. Washington had several men thus working for him; Patrick Henry had Joseph Martin; Richard Henderson, "father of Kentucky," had Daniel Boone, who had as good an eye for rich acres as for rifle aim; and James Robertson, the "father of Tennessee," was such a frontier agent for several men.

It is the purpose of this paper to trace rapidly certain features of the career of one of these businessmen of the eighteenth century, and to show even from a rapid survey how closely his affairs and interests and those of his associates affected the history of his section.

William Blount, the eldest son of Jacob Blount, was born in eastern North Carolina on March 26, 1749. He was of Cavalier blood, a descendant of a Royalist baronet whose sons came to Virginia about 1669. Jacob was a man of substance who dwelt in a family mansion, Blount Hall, and educated his seven surviving sons well above the colonial average. Three sons, William, Thomas, and John Gray Blount early turned to the mercantile business, particularly to warehousing and intercolonial trade. With the outbreak of the Revolution some of the sons went into combat duty, but William took shares in privateers and became a pay-

master for the 3rd North Carolina Continental Regiment, and John Gray and Thomas continued in their mercantile firm.

The period of the Revolution, however, saw William Blount launched into the large-scale land operations which absorbed him for the rest of his life. Around 1775 William and his brothers invested (3) in Richard Henderson's Company for the so-called Transylvania purchase in which, for an alleged £10,000 but probably for much less, the Company bought most of Kentucky and the better part of middle Tennessee. This action was in violation of the Proclamation Line of 1763 and all existing Indian treaty lines, and the Company was attacked by the governors of both Virginia and North Carolina. Moreover, rival land speculators headed by Patrick Henry and George Rogers Clark blocked the Virginia Assembly's legal recognition of the purchase; that Assembly nevertheless gave the Company 200,000 acres on the Ohio River in compensation.(4) The associates then turned to that part of their purchase which lay south of the Virginia boundary, and backed the establishment of the Nashville community. The North Carolina Assembly, like the Virginia, refused to recognize the validity of the Company's purchase, but the North Carolina speculators, led by William and John Gray Blount, granted the Company, that is, themselves, 200,000 acres in compensation here also.(5)

Besides his loss of £300,000 of North Carolina's funds at the rout at Camden(6), there is little of note in William Blount's army career, but in the army he made a number of useful acquaintances, and became familiar with army finance, or rather with the current lack of it. North Carolina was financially one of the least prepared states for the outbreak of the Revolution. Crippled by a lack of specie,

the state had resorted to paper money emissions which were unredeemed; taxes were in arrears; and the taxation system was badly administered and inadequate even for peace-time conditions. (7) The assertion of independence in 1776 having brought with it no modification of the average North Carolinian's traditional refusal to pay taxes, recourse was again had to paper issue, so that \$45,000,000 of it was issued in the six years after the outbreak of the Revolution, of which amount \$34,100,000 was still outstanding in 1782, when the state went bankrupt. Members of the Assembly of 1782 were paid in corn, and in January, 1783 the Assembly failed to meet, due to general poverty. Barter was then practiced, after which paper money was again issued, and between 1783 and 1786 the state printed \$500,000 in bills of credit. All this meant, of course, that specie or soundly backed money became extremely scarce. In 1782 anyone in North Carolina fortunate enough to command specie could exchange \$1 in specie for \$725 in paper. (8) This William Blount was able to do since John Gray and Thomas dealt in shipping to the West Indies, the major source of specie for the states, and also shipped to the northern states, whose currencies were, in general, much sounder than North Carolina's.

The businessmen also profited from the anti-Loyalist legislation of the Revolution. Beginning with threats as early as 1776, the North Carolina Assembly proceeded in 1779 to outright confiscation and sale of the property of suspected classes and of certain individuals. This latter act also provided that debts owed to Loyalists might be paid to the state in its depreciated currency. This legislation, in which much personal enmity and greed were involved, was a bitter political issue for years. It was the product of an alliance between radical Whigs, representatives of the debtor

classes, and businessmen. The latter, of course, profited by being able to pay debts at a fraction of their face value, and to acquire land at tremendously depreciated prices.(9)

Of far greater importance to Blount, however, was legislation concerning western lands in what is now Tennessee. By 1777, North Carolina, faced with mounting expenses and falling credit, turned to her western domain as a source of revenue. Thus, in July, 1777, Indian titles were extinguished in some places by treaty, and in November of the same year the Assembly created Washington County, comprising modern Tennessee(10); and by another act (11) the lands in it and other counties were thrown open for sale at 50 s. per 100 acres. Although most of the Washington County land was beyond the treaty line just made in July with the Indians, over a million acres were entered before continued financial depreciation and the approach of the British army caused the land office to be closed in 1781. (12)

But North Carolina's difficulties were just beginning. The army had not been paid and was dwindling, and the state now faced invasion from Cornwallis. Accordingly the legislature in 1780 voted \$500 a year, a prime slave, and 200 acres of western land to anyone enlisting as a private for three years, and set up a military reservation for these bounty lands. (13) 1781 saw the invasion and a worsening of affairs, so that in 1782 the inducement was raised to 640 acres of western land and up, according to rank, until it reached 12,000 acres for a brigadier. (14)

The significance of this legislation for Blount is obvious. He and his fellow speculators bought heavily of these military warrants at modest prices from the veterans, many of whom had little use for distant lands, but much use for immediate cash. (15) Furthermore Blount secured appointment as a member of the state board set up to liquidate

and settle claims made under the military land acts (16), which position placed him in such an advantageous situation that he was able to buy up at least 50,000 acres of these military warrants. (17) These purchases, with Richard Henderson's compensation lands, constituted Blount's first two plunges in western lands. The third soon followed.

Blount sat in the Continental Congress for North Carolina in 1782, but, significantly, he resigned and came home to be elected to the real-estate minded House of Commons which met in April, 1783. At this session the commissioners who had laid out the military reservation under the 1782 act reported. From them Blount learned that the great bend of the Tennessee River, including the present Muscle Shoals, was south of the North Carolina boundary instead of north, as had been formerly supposed. Immediately a company was formed (18), whose membership illustrates the alliance of east and west in speculation. From the east were Blount; Richard Caswell, many times governor and land speculator supreme; General Griffith Rutherford, Indian fighter and businessman; and, later, James Glasgow, Secretary of State of North Carolina, an officer who issued land grants. Western members were John Donelson, surveyor; Joseph Martin, Indian Agent for Virginia and North Carolina and land agent of Patrick Henry; and John Sevier, frontier hero. The eastern members were to secure the warrants and supply capital; the western members to treat with the Indians, make surveys, and use their influence among the frontiersmen to promote settlement. (19)

Martin and Donelson, having been commissioned previously by Virginia to make a treaty with the friendly Chickasaw Indians, used the occasion of the treaty meeting to purchase for the company the Chickasaw claims to the company's proposed lands, for which act they were cen-

sured by the governor of Virginia. (20) Such rebukes moved the other company members not at all, and the next step in their program is outlined by Blount himself. In a letter of October 26, 1783, to Colonel Martin he writes:

I am very glad to find that you have made the purchase of the Indians of the Bent of the Tennessee and I think cheap enough . . . I am told a dispute has arose between the states of Georgia and South Carolina by the latter claiming the right to back lands as far west as the Mississippi river. Now if South Carolina has any back lands the Bent of Tennessee must be a part of it. This dispute between the two states will in my opinion be very favorable to our designs of obtaining the Georgia title or the South Carolina title and either will answer our purpose equally well for we shall surely settle the country before the dispute can be determined, and in order to procure a title from one or both of those states I will certainly attend both their next Assemblies and I have not the least doubt but that I shall succeed. (21)

He then goes on to say that from "good policy" he approves of admitting General Rutherford and John Sevier to the company. He concludes:

It would seem to me that every person I have seen here envied the purchase and wished to own a part of the Bent of Tennessee . . . P.S. I think it would be wise to admit some more partners in Georgia or South Carolina and probably shall be obliged to do it.

Blount did better than he promised. He wrote the petition for the company to present to the Georgia legislature, and also the act for the legislature to pass recognizing the company and appointing commissioners from Georgia and North Carolina to survey the land and deal with the company. Georgia, as Blount surmised, was concerned about the South Carolina claims, and also the Spanish who were rumored to be settling the area. Also, new company members from Georgia and South Carolina were strategically added. The results Blount reported in a letter of March 9, 1784, to his fellow member, Colonel John Donelson:

Dear Sir: Herewith you will receive a copy of the petition presented by me to the Assembly of the State of Georgia. The Petition I hope will meet with your approbation. I thought it the best calculated to suit the temper of the General Assembly and to answer the purposes of the company that I could invent. . . . The Commissioners of the State of Georgia with whom I had several meetings, are very well disposed. I could not wish for better ones. Those of North Carolina were nominated by myself in the fullest confidence that each of them would act. It is unnecessary to say anything to induce you to act but to beg your attention to the resolutions, especially that part that empowers the commissioners to make the company such compensation as may be adequate and satisfactory. Nothing will more readily influence the commissioners of Georgia to grant the company a large quantity of land than an appearance of many people being about to remove to the Bent under the influence of the company, therefore you will necessarily keep a report of as many being about to remove as you possibly can whether true or not. . . . If the commissioners of North Carolina have no objection I should be glad to be appointed Colonel, those of Georgia have already assured me that I shall be appointed . . . . You will see I have made use of Bledsoe's name although he had never signed the Articles; my reason for doing so was that he was known to be our over-mountain man and of much influence; consequently . . . gave weight to the petition . . . . (22)

In closing, Blount speaks of the other commissioners: the "truth is, they all appear to have a great thirst for Tennessee lands."

And so at first all went well. In July, 1784, Blount's three commissioners and Colonel Stephen Heard of Georgia met and created officers for the new county. John Sevier was made Colonel and entrytaker, John Donelson county surveyor and Lieutenant Colonel, Joseph Martin Indian Agent, and Blount and other members Justices of the Peace. Thus the company monopolized the county administration, especially in the all-important control of lands. "What would have happened to the lands of the county is indicated by a warrant of the state of Georgia directing John Donelson, surveyor of Houston county, to lay out for John Sevier



1000 acres of land in Houston county. The warrant is signed by John Donelson and John Sevier.”(23)

Events, however, went awry, and although the board of commissioners met at least twice more and in December, 1785, warrants were issued for land (24), the company never succeeded, due to Indian enmity and the unexpected rise of the new state of Franklin in 1784. The company is of importance, nevertheless, because it illustrates the influence of the businessmen and their methods of operation, and because of its effect on the course of later events, which will be noted.

In the land-hungry North Carolina Assembly of 1783, the plans of the company had interested a few lucky men, but the many whom Blount mentioned as envying the company members had plans of their own in which the master speculators were also interested. Therefore Blount and his associates, as the formal steering committee of the legislature, drew up and put through the land act of 1783, since called “The Great Land Grab.” This amazing piece of legislation opened the land office for western lands, closed since 1781, and threw open the entire area of the present state of Tennessee with small exceptions.(25) The first of these was the military reservation; the second was the 200,000 acres of the Henderson associates.(26) Finally, the Cherokees, despite the Treaty of 1777, which gave them more territory, were reserved only a small area south of the Holston, French Broad, and Big Pigeon rivers.

With these exceptions, the whole of North Carolina’s western country was opened for sale at £10 per 100 acres. The money made receivable for the lands was state and continental bills at 800 to 1, and specie certificates (notes issued during the war for goods received by the state) at their *face value*. Since these certificates had in fact depre-

ciated to between 2 and 3 shillings per £, and 8 shillings specie were equivalent to 1 Spanish dollar, the lands were sold at around \$5 per 100 acres. Furthermore, to make funds available for speculation, Blount introduced and secured the passage of an act emitting £ 100,000 in paper currency. (27)

The connection between these land and money acts and the activities of the speculators was clearly seen by contemporaries. Four years later, in 1787, an act was passed giving John Armstrong, the entry taker for western lands, further time to settle his accounts with the state, and against this William Tatham and others in the legislature protested, saying, in part:

It appears to us that the opening of that land office was in the first instance an infringement on the...rights of the people; that a premeditated plan was laid previous to opening the said office to effect a depreciation of the public securities for the ends of monopoly, and that certain persons had then in view the establishment of aristocracy on the Cumberland and other western waters . . . . (28)

The protest also throws light on the methods of Armstrong, a Blount associate:

It was the duty of Colonel Armstrong to have counted the money and securities 'said to have been received in bundles', a weak deception he ought not to have suffered anyone to palm off upon him...and...his credulity... has a tendency to keep the public interest suspended for the speculation of a junta of individuals.

The act of 1783 was thus made by speculators, and they took full advantage of their handiwork. A veritable army of surveyors descended on the western country. The present site of Memphis was entered by John Rice and John Ramsey in October, 1783, for 5000 acres each. (29) Patrick Henry sent Joseph Martin from Virginia to locate lands. (30) Colonel James Robertson made an extensive survey-

ing trip with others from French Lick on Cumberland River, descending the Ohio and Mississippi to west Tennessee, Rutherford alone locating 365,000 acres of land.(31) James White and Robert Love explored the Holston-French Broad area, including the site where White later established Knoxville.(32) Another company contained Governor Caswell, James Glasgow, and probably William Blount. They secured the services of John Donelson, candidate for surveyor of Greene County, and his son Stockley, surveyor of Sullivan County. (33) The possible advantage of including the Secretary of State is testified to by the later trial and conviction of Glasgow for fraudulently issuing grants for thousands of acres. The surveyors' utility is shown by Donelson's 20,000 acres entered for himself despite the legal limit of 5000 acres. (34)

Blount, of course, used his act to the fullest extent. Besides having a probable interest in the Caswell and White enterprises, he employed Robertson to survey thousands of acres of military warrants, and in addition bought thousands of other acres by private sales.(35) This rush of land barons was of course accompanied by the activities of smaller operators and individual home-seekers in unknown numbers, and resulted in the taking up of 4,393,945 acres (36) besides the military reservation entries, disposing of at least 10 million more acres. It was one of the greatest land seizures in American history, made possible by the speculators in violation of all Indian agreements.

It was in violation, too, of policies formerly expressed by Blount himself. The question of the disposal of North Carolina's western lands dated from earlier years. The Continental Congress, desperately needing some form of permanent income, repeatedly asked the states to cede to Congress their western lands. New York and Virginia did so with res-

ervations, and pressure was applied on the North Carolina delegates to do likewise. As early as 1782, Blount and Hugh Williamson wrote from Congress to Governor Martin that "we need not inform you North Carolina has long been viewed in a very unfavorable point of light".(37)

However, on the question of the disposition of the western lands opinion in North Carolina was sharply divided. The eastern inhabitants generally favored ceding the lands to Congress. Some, Federal-minded men such as Archibald Maclaine or Benjamin Hawkins, urged it to strengthen the central government; others to get rid of the expense of Indian wars or the turbulence of the frontiersmen. But a second group in the state opposed the cession. These felt that the state should retain her western lands to sell and thus pay her quota of the Revolutionary debt incurred by Congress, or to pay her state debt. Joined with these were men such as James White who hoped for further personal acquisition in the west, which might be hampered by Congressional control. Governor Martin led the anti-cessionists.

Blount and Williamson, in Congress in 1782, saw another side of the problem. On October 22 they wrote Governor Martin on the subject. They pointed out that by the 8th Article of the Confederation each state's quota of the national debt would be fixed according to the value of all lands surveyed in the state, and that this method was in one sense favorable to North Carolina, which had fewer towns and less highly cultivated land than other states. But in another sense, they wrote, the method was unfavorable, for while the revenue arising from the sale of the western lands was small, those lands "would render our quota of the national debt near double of what it is at present."

For in fixing the quota every state must be charged with its located lands, and as land jobbers are not a very popular set of

men in any country, and as the lands are probably to be valued by indifferent [impartial] people, we may be assured that the western lands, which are located but not improved, will be rated at their full value and we suspect that our western lands on this side of Ohio are nearly double of those lands already located in this state. (38)

The delegates go on to say that the army is "clamorous," the treasury empty, and "we know that the state will not be able to raise the quota that is assigned to her for 1783." They therefore suggest that a cession would solve problems, provided that it be made on certain conditions, among which were that Congress should assume the state's Indian war expenses, that the ceded land should be used to pay the public debt, and that any new state which might later be created from the cession should assume that proportion of the debt that its lands bore.

Governor Martin replied to this in January of 1783, saying, "It will not be to our interest or policy to make a cession . . . on any terms yet proposed." He stated that the provisos mentioned by the delegates would be bare justice and no favor, and, waxing eloquent in anger, continued:

To insist that the state should cede her vacant lands which are daily settling with numerous inhabitants from which we expect to derive considerable advantages . . . is the same as to urge an individual to give up to a stranger without compensation part of his land he is daily improving with husbandmen and husbandry to his own emolument and that of his family. This is in short endeavoring to carry into effect a vile *Agrarian* law the Romans anciently made in vain. . . . (39)

It has been noted that in 1783 this view prevailed, and that the astute Blount, foreseeing that it would, went home from Congress to put himself at the head of the speculators, with the result that not only was there no cession, but in April Blount directed the passage of the act which opened the western lands for sale, and then himself profited by his

legislation. Governor Martin wrote in high glee to the delegates in Congress:

Perhaps Congress may be dissatisfied with the mode of our land office being opened as we have made them no cession of any part of our western lands... but we cannot think of parting with any on this side of the Mississippi, as our bounds are small in comparison to Virginia, until our own internal debt is paid, which is immense, and this land seems to be the only proper means by which this can be effected. (40)

Unconsciously testifying to the forethought and planning of the speculators he added: "I can venture to say there will be no cession of any lands worthy of acceptance, as the principal lands will be entered before this reaches you."

Martin's pleasure, however, was short. At the April session of the Assembly in 1784, Blount introduced and carried a bill ceding the western lands to Congress.(41) This was possible because by his act of 1783 he had shrewdly increased the number of landholders, and these men, combining with the seacoast pro-cessionists and the speculators, or some of them, forced the bill through. Blount and others with landed interests saw that by a cession the central government could be burdened with the protection of their lands from the Indians, and so into the cession act they wrote a guarantee of all their holdings, although not the other provisions, such as the assumption of previous Indian expenses, declared by Blount and Williamson to be necessary conditions of the cession. However, the fight over the act was bitter.(42) At one time it came within a single vote of failure, and on its passage, thirty-seven members spread on the pages of the Journal a dissent, in the course of which they stated that they "could never consent that the public faith to the state's creditors could be violated and the general interest sacrificed to the aggrandizement of a few land jobbers who have preyed on

the depreciated credit of their country and the necessities of the unfortunate citizen.”(43)

Williamson, returning from Congress and disgusted with state bickering there, also opposed the law.(44) He pointed out in a long letter to Governor Martin that the Indian war costs had not been laid on Congress, that Massachusetts and Connecticut had recently advanced new claims to the western territory, that Rhode Island had rejected the proposal for a 5% impost desired by North Carolina, and that Georgia, which had huge western claims and had contributed to the Revolution, had not ceded any land. He asserted that while North Carolina had retained her lands she had possessed a lever with which she could force concessions from Congress and the other states, but that she had given up this advantage while very important aims were as yet unrealized, and he suggested that the late cession act should be suspended at once. (45)

The force of this argument, combined with the anger of the westerners in the ceded lands, many of whom were irked by North Carolina's treatment (46), and who wanted to be created a new state instead of being given up to Congress as a territory, and the appeal of Governor Martin's arguments in favor of retaining the land for the enrichment of North Carolina, all turned the scale. Hence in October of the same year of 1784 which saw the cession, Blount, now the voteless Speaker of the Commons, had the mortification of witnessing the repeal of his cession act.(47) It is to be noted, however, that this repeal in no way affected the holdings of the speculators as all titles were guaranteed in both cession and repeal.

Among the most important effects of the brief cession and its repeal were those on the peculiar career of the state of Franklin. Much has been written on this abortive state (48), but its origin and career were profoundly affected, like so

much else in western history, with the activities of the businessmen. It appears that a group of southeastern Virginia and western North Carolina land operators under the leadership of Arthur Campbell and William Cocke planned the erection of a new state to be composed of western counties of North Carolina and perhaps Virginia in order to seize from the eastern seaboard its control of land grants in the west. (49) Profiting by general western anger at the east over lack of protection from Indians, lack of governmental facilities despite taxation, and general eastern indifference if not enmity (50), these speculators, in August, 1784, immediately after the cession act passed, promoted the calling of a convention of the westerners, and began a movement for independence. The news of the repeal of the cession deterred some, but the majority decided to carry the movement on and seek statehood from Congress.

The danger of this to the Carolina speculators in the east is apparent. The territories claimed by the new state included much of Tennessee and even the Muscle Shoals lands. (51) Hence, though personally mollified by the diplomatically bestowed post of Brigadier General of the militia, John Sevier realized, or was made to realize, that he must protect his land claims and those of his associates. Consequently, in order to guard these investments and his own popularity, he allowed himself to be elected governor of the new state, and took up the task of securing separation from North Carolina. This proved to be no easy undertaking, for Congress would not act in their behalf, and though both Governors Martin and Caswell professed to see future separation on "reasonable terms," the North Carolina legislature steadfastly refused to grant separation.

Hence an opera-bouffe situation developed. Protracted negotiations took place by letter and emissary, and heated



exchanges occurred between the rebel who did not want to rebel, and the governor who was a joint speculator with the rebel and a member of the same land company. Neither really cared for the fortunes of the state of Franklin, so long as land claims and popularity with his constituents were protected. While public letters and proclamations thundered, a private correspondence carried assurances of mutual esteem. Thus Caswell in North Carolina writes: "I am honoured with your favor of the 9th of last month; the Bent of Tennessee is still an object with me of an interesting nature and I am much concerned that you have not received my letters." He goes on to say that he has sent two letters, to deny that he thinks it beneath him to correspond with a governor of Franklin, and to explain that as Governor of North Carolina he cannot appear too friendly in public, but that he is glad to correspond privately, and adds:

I am obliged by the information . . . respecting the . . . business transacted regarding the Tennessee lands and happy to learn they are considered so delightful and rich . . . I do not recollect Colonel Blount's plan which you allude to . . . but . . . I expect [to see him] when I shall inform myself and write you under cover to Colonel Outlaw.

He assures Sevier that he will attend to a business matter for him, and suggests that Sevier make the usual returns on lands owned by them jointly so that grants of ownership can issue from North Carolina. (52)

A little earlier Sevier was writing to Blount concerning plans for settling the Muscle Shoals lands:

I wrote particularly to Governor Caswell concerning the boat. I have most exalted notions of our success and have matters I hope quite safe and almost in our hands as to the settling [of] that rich and fertile country. (53)

Thus "business as usual" went on between Caswell and Blount in the east and Sevier, the ostensible rebel, in the

west. But while Sevier earnestly sought a means of compromise, popular sentiment in the new state demanded that he keep up the unwelcome role of its champion.

Finally, he saw a chance to gain all aims at once. The state of Georgia, planning a campaign against the Creek Indians, sought the new state's aid. Sevier eagerly responded, an envoy was sent to Georgia, and it was planned that Sevier should raise and lead 1500 men and 500 horsemen to join the Georgians. (54) The soldiers would be repaid with lands in the bend of the Tennessee River. Thus, from Sevier's point of view, an exodus of settlers would start for the neighborhood of the company's lands, the troublesome Indians would be cleared from that vicinity, and at the same time recognition would be achieved for the state of Franklin. Preparations were pushed, but after delays Georgia informed him that the expedition was indefinitely postponed, pending a proposed Congressional treaty with the Creeks.

This was a fatal blow to Franklin. Meanwhile although the wily Caswell urged the Franklinites to present a united front to impress the North Carolina legislature (55), that body, while voting new officers, roads, and counties for the west, also provided for regular North Carolina elections to be held in the limits of the state of Franklin. (56) The results were dual elections, contested elections, and a dropping away from the rebel ranks. Sevier, deserted by his citizens, turned to the outermost frontiers and plunged into reckless Indian slaughter. (57) This restored his waning prestige with his frontier neighbors and at the same time removed him from the scene while Blount and his other friends worked for his political rehabilitation in North Carolina. The results were pardon, retroactive restoration of military rank, and election to the North Carolina legislature. (58)

The collapse of Franklin was due in part to the general

realization that final cession of the western lands by North Carolina to the central government was imminent. Well before 1789 the choice portions of the public domain had been granted away. Also the new federal constitution was now in effect, and North Carolina, having rejected it in 1788, accepted membership in the Union the next year.(59) The logical result was therefore another cession act yielding up the western territory under practically identical terms with those of 1784, which included, of course, the guarantee of ownership of already granted lands.(60)

Congress, having accepted the cession, passed an act creating it into the Territory Southwest of the River Ohio under a government closely resembling that created by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 as amended.(61) There were, of course, many candidates for the all-important position of Governor of the new territory—Sevier, Martin, St. Clair, and others; but Blount's power in North Carolina politics was reflected in the fact that he received the almost unanimous recommendation of the North Carolina Congressional delegation, and he received the position.(62)

That he sought the prize, and his reasons, are shown in his letter to John Steele, a Congressman from his state:

Be pleased to accept my sincere thanks . . . for the very active and friendly part you took in bringing about an event so much to be wished by me, but independent of these considerations the appointment *itself* is truly important to me, more so in my opinion than any other in the gift of the President could have been. The salary is handsome and my western lands had become so great an object to me that it had become absolutely necessary that I should go to the western country to secure them and perhaps my presence might have enhanced their value. I am sure my present appointment will. (63)

This naive candor proved to be an understatement. The prince of speculators now had a clear field in which to work.

The strength of the Franklin movement and the political

acumen of Blount, as well as his close connections with the Sevier group, are all displayed in the fact that the new governor drew heavily from ex-Franklinites in making appointments. Sevier, the governor's partner, and Robertson, his land agent, became the two brigadier generals of the militia districts on the governor's recommendation. More important, he filled a host of other strategic offices with friends and associates: surveyors, entry-takers, justices of the peace, and most important of all, the county militia officers. The patronage groundwork was laid so thoroughly that although Blount opposed the formation of the territorial legislature, yet when it was formed, he never seems to have had serious differences with it.

Space does not allow an examination of Blount's dual role of speculator and governor, but a few outstanding features of his regime may be noted. Besides being in a position to direct to his own lands or those of his associates newcomers who sought the governor's advice on locations, and besides having an unparalleled opportunity for securing the best lands through many sources of information, the governor could affect real estate values through official decisions, and, above all, he could make treaties with the Indians, treaties which involved land.

The Governor thus instructed his private surveyor:

Lay as many of the warrants within the Indian bounds [that is, on the white's side] as you can, taking care to avoid disputes in the Titles, but in case you cannot find good lands within the boundary and have got surveys without the bounds [on the Indian's side] already made, then let such locations rest as they are. (64)

The canny Blount knew that those who settled within the Indians' lands would produce friction there so that a treaty must ensue, and hence his entries across the line would ultimately be made good.

Events proved the logic of his reasoning. Upon his appointment as Governor, Blount was instructed to hold a treaty with the Indians for the purpose of quieting the incessant warfare. This instruction he obeyed with alacrity, and with some difficulty assembled the Cherokee chiefs at Knoxville to a gathering held with all the pomp and ceremony of which the extreme frontier was capable. The opening formalities over, however, Blount informed the amazed Indians that the purpose of the treaty was to obtain from them a cession of land. The chiefs protested violently, but the Governor persisted day after day, pointing out that the Indians had lost all rights by assisting the British in the Revolution (which was *not* the view held by the United States government), and that, besides, the Indians had no money to go to Philadelphia to appeal to the government, and therefore might as well accede. According to a later Indian protest, Blount at first

asked of us lands at the Muscle Shoals. I told him that we could not give them up as they were not clearly our property, but belonged to the Four Nations and were the common hunting grounds . . . Governor Blount told me that he had already purchased the lands of the state of Georgia, but was desirous of making a fuller purchase of our nation . . . (65)

This, however, being successfully demurred, Blount then pressed on for a new cession of lands to be made to the United States. After seven days of argument a new boundary was agreed on in return for gifts and an annuity from the United States.(66) Blount, of course, possessed lands in the territory ceded by the Indians.(67)

But the Governor was not yet through. The treaty had to be written in English and then read aloud to the Indians for their assent. How this was done was described later by an investigator: the "person" who held the treaty

made out the articles in writing wherein he inserted the free navigation of the Cherokee [Tennessee] river without their knowledge, and bribed the interpreter to read ten miles around Nashville village where 40 was inserted.

The natives required \$3000 per annum as a gift. Blount assured them his authority would not sanction this amount but

for the present he would insure \$2000 and had no doubt of obtaining the whole sum by application to Congress. But in the article it was read \$2000 where \$1000 only was inserted.(68)

The crowning touch was then applied in running the treaty line. The new line, run by surveyors appointed by the Governor, was publicly known as "the accommodation line" because it was frankly run in such a way as to "accommodate" those settlers whose homes were too far into Indian territory to be retrieved even by the new treaty.(69) More illegal acres were thus obtained, and the settlers remained, for it proved politically impossible to remove them.

However, Governor Blount had his troubles, and when Tennessee became a state in 1796 and he went to Philadelphia as one of her first senators, he embarked on his supreme gamble. One trouble was that the price of western lands was dropping. This was due partly to engrossment, partly also to the mild depression of the 1790's. When Andrew Jackson, a Blount protégé, went to Philadelphia in 1795, he found to his disgust that in selling 50,000 acres, the best price he could get was 20c an acre. While he had bought at 10c an acre and thus made 100% profit, it was not enough.(70) Blount, too, had extended his credit to the utmost, and required large returns. But the principal difficulty was international. The untrammelled outlet of a free navigation of the Mississippi was essential for the westerner, for without it his lands and his products were not marketable. Earlier troubles with Spain had been relieved by the Pinckney Treaty of 1795, but

the course of international events now led all America to believe that Spain was planning to cede Louisiana and Florida to France, thus placing a formidable power athwart the outlet. This situation caused a depression in land sales which involved thousands of dollars for the heavily-invested Blount.

He had for several years extended his land sales through agents in both England and France, and in the former country had used the influence of the English purchasers to urge their government to bring pressure on Spain to unshackle the Mississippi outlet.(71) Now he went a step further. Along with his agent, a certain Dr. Nicholas Romaine of New York whom he had met while in the Continental Congress, Blount outlined a plan envisioning a three-fold attack on the Spanish possessions. One private army would attack East Florida, the second, led by Blount himself, would seize New Orleans, and a third would occupy Spain's trans-Mississippi territories. The armies would be composed of frontiersmen, eager for land bounties, and of Indians, engaged through the influence of certain interested United States Agents, with some of whom Blount had worked closely while Governor. The British rôle would be to control the Gulf, and to furnish naval assistance in the attacks; their reward would be the Floridas. What would happen to the seized lands besides the Floridas was never made clear. The important thing to westerners and Blount of course was that the control of the Mississippi would be secured. (72)

Coming in those 1797 days of war and tension in international affairs, the plan was diplomatic dynamite, being almost certain to involve the United States in a war with Spain, and probably France. The British Minister in the United States received it gingerly, and passed it on to his London superiors. Before they could reply, Blount wrote a

letter (73) to Carey, an Indian Agent, discussing details of the plan. Carey, a weak link, got drunk and showed the letter to a loyal United States Agent, who sent it to the Secretary of War. This disclosure put the Federalist leaders in a quandary, as they were already accused of subserviency to British interests. Hence the arch-Federalist Secretary of State Pickering, though deeply at odds with Blount, suggested suppressing the letter. President Adams, however, with his family's supreme disdain for political expediency, laid the letter before the Congress, called in special session, with the unsuspecting Blount in attendance. The result was the first impeachment in our national history. The Senate at once expelled Blount, and the House appointed a committee to prepare impeachment charges and try him before the Senate. (74) Blount was released on bond, which he forfeited and fled to Tennessee (75) where he was hailed as a hero. The Tennessee Senate Speaker, James White, of Knoxville land fame, resigned to accept a Federal position, and Blount was elected to the Tennessee Senate and unanimously chosen to fill White's Speakership. (76)

Meanwhile the Congressional committee collected evidence, and in 1798 the Senate Sergeant at Arms was sent to Knoxville to bring Blount to Philadelphia for trial. This officer was courteously received, lived and was entertained in Blount's home, but was informed by the citizens that he could not take Mr. Blount back with him, and finding it impossible to raise a posse, he returned to Philadelphia without his prisoner. (77) In Blount's absence his defence was conducted by his lawyers who argued that 1) he could not be impeached as a Senator because he had already been expelled from his seat in the Senate, and 2) a Senator was not a civil officer within the meaning of the Constitution, and therefore the Senate had no jurisdiction. After weeks of oratory the



Senate accepted the latter plea by a vote of 14 to 11, and the case was dropped. (78)

Blount meanwhile re-entered his business career. He immediately ran again for the Senate, (79) was defeated, and continued his land interests. (80) He, Sevier, and other speculators interfered actively with the commissioners appointed by the United States to run a treaty line with the Indians in 1799 (81), because a fixed line guaranteed by an impartial government would invalidate the speculators' lands deliberately surveyed in Indian territory. Letters of the time indicate that neither Blount's prestige nor his business was seriously impaired by the Spanish fiasco, and it is quite possible that he would have again been elected to high office within the state. However, he died suddenly at Knoxville in 1800 at 50 years of age.

Such, then, was the career of a land speculator. It is not here contended that the west was *made* by such speculators, but early western society like all others required leadership, and this was furnished by those who possessed the ability to organize and plan on a scale commensurate with the vastness of the scene in which they moved. The personal goals of these men and the development of the west were interrelated, and they worked absorbedly for both. Besides his colossal land deals in private business, Blount pursued an active public career which included service in both houses of the North Carolina legislature for several years, in the Continental Congress, in the Federal Constitutional Convention and the North Carolina ratifying convention, six years as Governor of the Southwest Territory, a period in the United States Senate, and a Speakership in the Tennessee Senate. In all these positions he served well his country, his associates, and himself. When the case of Blount is multiplied many, many times by the Caswells, the Martins, the Armstrongs, the

Polks, the Seviars, the Jacksons, and dozens of other leaders, it becomes evident that the parts played by these leaders in the development of the west were decisive. The history of their activities, though deliberately secretive, often obscure, and always difficult to trace, needs more careful study for a true history of the American west.

W. H. MASTERSON

# NOTES

1. Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *From Frontier to Plantation in Tennessee* (Chapel Hill, 1932), p. 19. Hereafter cited as T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*. This excellent book, which has not received adequate attention from historians of the Southwest, contains much material used in the preparation of this paper.
2. Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The Spanish-American Frontier: 1783-1795* (Boston, 1927), p. 48.
3. William Blount to John Gray Blount, June 22, 1777, Blount Correspondence, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.
4. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, pp. 25-26.
5. Walter Clark (ed.) *The State Records of North Carolina* (Goldsboro, 1895-1905), XXIV, 530-531. Hereafter cited as S.R.N.C. William Blount was on the steering committee of this 1783 legislature, and supported the bill in its passage, S.R.N.C., XIX, 233, 354. John G. Blount was on the special committee to which the bill was referred, *ibid.*, 283.
6. S.R.N.C., XIX, 14.
7. The tax collectors in 1770 owed the colony \$160,000. James Clarence Posey, "William Blount, the Land Speculator" (Master of Arts Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1929), pp. 12-13. Hereafter cited as J. C. Posey, "William Blount."
8. J. C. Posey, "William Blount", p. 13. North Carolina's currency was so valueless that in 1786 one of her delegates to the Congress in Philadelphia had to bring his private naval stores with him to sell in order to defray his expenses. S.R.N.C., XXII, 993; XVIII, 601, 645, 718.
9. S.R.N.C., XXIV, 209-214. The letters of Archibald Maclaine to his son-in-law, George Hooper, display the motives and intensity of this battle, e.g., April 21, 1784, S.R.N.C., XVII, 134; June 14, 1784, *ibid.*, 144-147. See also I. S. Harrell, "North Carolina Loyalists", *North Carolina Historical Review*, III (1926), 575-590; Robert O. Du Mond, *The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution* (Durham, 1940).
10. S.R.N.C., XXIV, 141-142.

11. S.R.N.C., XXIV, 43-48.
12. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, p. 37.
13. S.R.N.C., XXIV, 337-339.
14. S.R.N.C., XXIV, 419-422.
15. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, p. 43. Blount to James Robertson, April 29, 1792, December 12, 1793, January 19, 1794, *American Historical Magazine* (Nashville, 1896-1904), I (1896), 392-393, III (1898), 269-270, 282-283. Hereafter cited as *A.H.M.*
16. S.R.N.C. XXIV, 420.
17. J. C. Posey, "William Blount," pp. 52-53, 55-56; Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West* (New York, 1896), III. part 1, 248-249.
18. This company was often referred to by contemporaries as Blount's company. Its origin is explained in a letter of Joseph Martin to Patrick Henry, May 25, 1783 in William Wirt Henry, *Life, Correspondence, and Speeches of Patrick Henry* (New York, 1891), III, 243-244. There are many references to it in the correspondence of that day, especially in the Tennessee Papers of the Draper Collection of Manuscripts, and printed in the *Calendar of Virginia State Papers* (Richmond, 1875-93) III. Notable later accounts are John Haywood, *The Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee* (Nashville, 1891), pp 172, 175; Carl Driver, *John Sevier, Pioneer of the Old Southwest* (Chapel Hill, 1932), pp. 70-78; T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, pp. 65-76, 84-85; A. P. Whitaker, "The Muscle Shoals Speculation, 1783-1789", *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XIII (1926), 365-386; S. C. Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin* (Johnson City, Tenn., 1924), pp. 14, 17, 176f.
19. Joseph Martin to Patrick Henry, May 21, 1783, W. W. Henry, *Life, Correspondence and Speeches of Patrick Henry*, III, 243-244.
20. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, p. 66. Martin's part troubled him later, and seemed to threaten his official position, W. P. Palmer (ed.), *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, III, 560, 581, 590, 602. Hereafter cited as *C.V.S.P.*
21. Blount to Col. Joseph Martin, October 26, 1783, Tennessee MSS. 4XX17, Draper Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin. Hereafter cited as Tenn. MSS.
22. Blount to Col. John Donelson, March 9, 1784, Tenn. MSS. 1XX72.
23. A. P. Whitaker, "The Muscle Shoals Speculation, 1783-1789", *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XIII (1926), 368-369.
24. Depositions, MSS Division, House Collection No. 6, Library of Congress, cited in Carl Driver, *John Sevier*, footnote 32, pp. 71-72.
25. S.R.N.C., XXIV, 478-482.
26. S.R.N.C., XXIV, 530-531.
27. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, pp. 50, 51; S.R.N.C., XIX, 307; XXIV, 475-478.

28. *S.R.N.C.*, XX, 294-295. Much evidence indicates a well-planned movement by interested persons to push through the act. Governor Martin informed the North Carolina delegates in the Continental Congress on April 30, 1783: "The principal object of Legislation is the opening [of] the Land Office in general, especially in the Western Country", *S.R.N.C.* XVI, 783. See also R. Caswell to Wm. Caswell, May 4, 1783, and Charles Johnson to Richard Bennington, May 5, 1783, *S.R.N.C.* XVI, 958-960, 960.
29. S. C. Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin*, 20.
30. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, p. 55.
31. Hon. P. T. Glass, "Sketch of Henry Rutherford", *A.H.M.*, V (1900), 226-227.
32. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, p. 53. This authority feels that the fact that Blount, as Governor of the Southwest Territory, was later to select this site, a howling wilderness, for his capital rather than an already established town, strongly indicates that he was behind this expedition.
33. Richard Caswell to Wm. Caswell, May 4, 1783, *S.R.N.C.* XVI, 959. Blount's probable involvement is deducible from a letter of Col. John Donelson to Capt. John Donelson, September 4, 1785, Tennessee MSS., Box D2, No. 610, Tennessee State Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.
34. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, pp. 55, 59.
35. J. C. Posey, "William Blount", pp. 52-53.
36. *S.R.N.C.*, XXI, 133.
37. Blount and Hugh Williamson to Gov. Martin, August 3, 1782, *S.R.N.C.*, XVI, 388.
38. Hu. Williamson and Wm. Blount to Gov. Martin, October 22, 1782, *S.R.N.C.*, XVI, 437-438.
39. Gov. Martin to the delegates in Congress, January 28, 1783, *S.R.N.C.*, XVI, 733. St. George L. Sioussat in his "The North Carolina Cession of 1784 in Its Federal Aspects," *Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association*, II (1908), 35-62, writing from a Federal point of view, castigates the selfishness of the state's interest group. But bearing in mind the state particularism of that day, one may easily find a principle in Martin's position. Of course, greed and political ambition also played their parts, Carl Driver, *John Sevier*, p. 85.
40. Gov. Martin to delegates in Congress, December 8, 1783, *S.R.N.C.*, XVI, 919-920.
41. *S.R.N.C.*, XIX, 567-568, 643-644; XXIV, 561-563.
42. R. Caswell to Wm. Caswell, May 23, 1784, *S.R.N.C.*, XVII, 143.
43. *S.R.N.C.*, XIX, 643, 712-714.
44. Himself a large landowner, Williamson stood midway between Governor Martin's state's interest position and the Federalism of Maclaine and Hooper.

45. July 5, 1784, *S.R.N.C.*, XVII, 80-83. See also Williamson to Martin, September 30, 1784, *ibid.*, 94-105.
46. *S.R.N.C.*, XXII, 637-640.
47. *S.R.N.C.*, XXIV, 678-679. The preamble to the act cites the reasons for the repeal. It passed 37-22, and was followed in its turn by a protest of twenty-two members, including John Gray Blount. *Ibid.*, XIX, 804-805, 830-832.
48. Writers from the time of Haywood have described it with varying degrees of sympathy. The best single work on it is S. C. Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin*. Hereafter cited as Williams, *Lost State*.
49. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, pp. 68, 81-96; Williams, *Lost State*, p. 54; Thomas Hutchings to Genl. Shelby, April 22, 1787, *S.R.N.C.*, XX, 679-680; Joseph Martin to P. Henry, September 19, 1785, *C.V.S.P.*, IV, 53; A. P. Whitaker, *The Spanish-American Frontier*, p. 51.
50. *S.R.N.C.*, XXII, 637-640; Williams, *Lost State*, p. 27.
51. A connection between Franklin and the lands in the bend of the Tennessee river was seen by a Westerner who wrote on December 20, 1784: "If I was to venture a conjecture, the good of the commonwealth is not at the bottom but the views of a few crafty land jobbers, whom you know who are aiming at purchasing the great Bent of Tennessee from the Indians and if not successful that way to contrive a quarrel, and drive the natives (Cortez-like) out by force", Cited in A. P. Whitaker, "The Muscle Shoals Speculation", 371. Evidence, including Sevier's conduct, seems to indicate, however, that it was not the original Blount company, but possible interlopers who began the move to form a new state.
52. Caswell to Sevier, July 12, 1786, Tennessee MSS., 4XX18 (2-4).
53. Sevier to Blount, October 7, 1785, Blount Correspondence, p. 18, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.
54. Williams, *Lost State*, pp. 102-110, 172-176, 185, 186, 187; John Haywood, *The Civil and Political History of . . . Tennessee*, pp. 185-6.
55. *S.R.N.C.*, XX, 617-618, 681.
56. *S.R.N.C.*, XXIV, 765-766, 766-767, 830-832, 915, 955, 972-973.
57. T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, p. 87; Jos. Martin to Samuel Johnston, March 24, 1788, *S.R.N.C.*, XXII, 716-718; George Maxwell to Joseph Martin, July 7, 1788, *ibid.*, 718-719; Little Turkey to Richard Winn, November 20, 1788, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, I, 46. Hereafter cited as *A.S.P.I.A.*
58. A. Campbell to Randolph, April 12, 1788, *C.V.S.P.*, IV 424; *S.R.N.C.*, XXII, 728-729.
59. *S.R.N.C.*, XXII, 2-35, 36-53.
60. *S.R.N.C.*, XXI, 679; Clarence Edwin Carter (ed.), *The Territorial Papers of the United States* (Washington, 1936) IV, 3-8, 9-12. Hereafter cited as Carter, *Territorial Papers*.

61. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, IV, 18-19.
62. Tenn. MSS, 3XX54, 3XX55, 3XX56; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, IV, 19-21, 22-23; A. P. Whitaker, *The Spanish-American Frontier*, p. 120.
63. July 10, 1790, H. M. Wagstaff (ed.), *The Papers of John Steele* (Raleigh, 1924), I, 67-70.
64. Blount to James Robertson, April 29, 1792, *A.H.M.*, I (1896), 392-393.
65. *A.S.P.I.A.*, I, 204.
66. J. W. Powell (Director), *Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1887), pp. 158-159.
67. J. C. Posey, "William Blount", pp. 69, 71; T. P. Abernethy, *Frontier to Plantation*, p. 120.
68. "Diary of Jacob Lindley", July 18, 1793, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* (Lansing, 1900-13), XVII, 611.
69. J. W. Powell (Director), *Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, p. 166.
70. A. P. Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803* (New York, 1934), pp. 14, 107; Blount to Robertson, April 24, 1797, *A.H.M.*, IV, 343.
71. Walter B. Posey, "The Blount Conspiracy", *Birmingham-Southern College Bulletin*, XXI (1928), 12. A. P. Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question*, p. 290 fn. 12.
72. The conspiracy has been examined by a number of writers and from various points of view. International backgrounds are treated in F. J. Turner, "The Policy of France Toward the Mississippi Valley", *American Historical Review*, X, (1904-05) 249-279, and A. P. Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803*. Best single accounts are Walter B. Posey, "The Blount Conspiracy", *Birmingham-Southern College Bulletin*, XXI (1928), 11-21, and Isabel Thompson, "The Blount Conspiracy", *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications*, II (1930), 3-21. Primary evidence is printed in *Annals of Congress*, 5th Congress (1797-1799) II, 2319-2416.
73. *Annals of Congress*, 5th Congress, II, 2349-2350. Also printed *A.H.M.*, IV (1899), 342-343.
74. *Annals of Congress*, 5th Congress, I, 34, 44, 448-466.
75. John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States* (New York, 1900-14), II, 342. This flight was probably unnecessary, but Blount probably went home to cover his tracks and avoid too much public inspection of his affairs.
76. J. G. M. Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Chattanooga, 1926), p. 700; W. B. Posey, "The Blount Conspiracy," p. 19.
77. J. G. M. Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 699-700.

78. *Annals of Congress*, 5th Congress, II, 2245-2319.
79. A. Campbell to T. Pickering, October 1, 1797, Pickering Papers, XXI, No. 277, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
80. Blount to Col. Hart, May 30, 1798, Thomas J. Clay Collection, III, 339-40, Library of Congress; Blount to Robertson, November 1, 1798, *A.H.M.*, IV (1899), 370.
81. Alfred Moore to James McHenry, June 30, 1799, B. C. Steiner, *Life and Correspondence of James McHenry* (Cleveland, 1907), 448.

